

21 FILM CLASSICS: A GIFT FROM JANUS FILMS

KVINNODROM (DREAMS). Directed and written by Ingmar Bergman. Photographed by Hilding Bladh. Art direction by Gittan Gustafsson. Produced by Rune Waldekranz. A Sandrew Production. With Harriet Andersson (Doris), Eva Dahlbeck (Susanne), Gunnar Björnstrand (Consul), Ulf Palme (Henrik), Inga Landgré (Henrik's wife), Sven Lindberg (Palle), Naima Wifstrand (Mrs. Arén), Benkt-Åke Benktsson (Magnus), Git Gay (Model), Ludde Gentzel (Photographer), Kerstin Hedeby (Marianne). 86 minutes. 1955.

This film, like MONIKA, has been dismissed in this country as minor Bergman. It clearly belongs to Bergman's middle period, narrating the usual theme of the efforts of two couples to establish satisfactory relationships between themselves. The French, once again, have found more of interest in the film than have their English-speaking counterparts. Eric Rohmer wrote in Cahiers du Cinéma, "It is perhaps at once the most successful in form and the most disdainful of the dramatic construction of Bergman's films." Though Rohmer's opinion rather overstates the case, the film is interestingly constructed, dove-tailing the two stories so that by the end they act as reverberators of one another.

NARA LIVET (BRINK OF LIFE) (SO CLOSE TO LIFE). Directed by Ingmar Bergman. Written by Bergman and Ulla Isaksson, based on "The Friendly, The Dignified" by Ulla Isaksson. Photographed by Max Willén. Sets by Bibi Lindström. Edited by Carl-Olof Skeppstedt. Produced by Gösta Hammarbäck. A Svenska A.B. Nordisk Tonefilm Production. With Ingrid Thulin (Cecilia), Eva Dahlbeck (Stina), Bibi Andersson (Hjördis), Barbro Hiort af Ornäs (Sister Brita), Max von Sydow (Harry Andersson), Erland Josephson (Anders Ellius), Inga Landgré (Gerta Ellius). 100 minutes. 1957.

Though something of a thesis film, marred by the predictability with which everything falls into place, BRINK OF LIFE is often effective because of the simplicity and severity of the direction, in keeping with the observation of the unities of time, setting, and action. Interest is also maintained because of the compelling performances of the three actresses in the leading roles. Perhaps the film has been neglected since it seemed an anti-climax after the richnesses of SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT and THE SEVENTH SEAL which immediately preceded it.

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